

Back to School Safety!

The following health and safety tips are recommendations made by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Traveling to and from School:

School Bus

- Children should always board and exit the bus at locations that provide safe access to the bus or to the school building.
- Remind your child to wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb.
- Make sure your child walks where they can see the bus driver (which means the driver will be able to see them, too).
- Remind your child to look both ways to see that no other traffic is coming before crossing the street, just in case traffic does not stop as required.
- Your child should not move around on the bus.
- If your child's school bus has lap/shoulder seat belts, make sure your child uses them at all times when in the bus.

Car

- All passengers should wear a seat belt or use an age- and size-appropriate car safety seat or booster seat.
- Your child should ride in a car safety seat with a harness as long as possible and then ride in a belt-positioning booster seat. Your child is ready for a booster seat when they have reached the top weight or height allowed for the seat, their shoulders are above the top harness slots, or their ears have reached the top of the seat.
- Your child should ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's seat belt fits properly (usually when the child reaches about 4' 9" in height and is between 8 to 12 years of age). This means that the child is tall enough to sit against the vehicle seat back with their legs bent at the knees, feet hanging down and the shoulder belt lies across the middle of the chest and shoulder, not the neck or throat. The lap belt should also be low and snug across the thighs, not the stomach.

- All children younger than 13 years of age should ride in the rear seat of vehicles. If you must drive more children than can fit in the rear seat (when carpooling, for example), move the front-seat passenger's seat as far back as possible and have the child ride in a booster seat if the seat belts do not fit properly without it.
- Remember that many crashes occur while novice teen drivers are going to and from school. Familiarize yourself with the State of Connecticut's graduated driver's license laws and consider the use of a parent-teen driver agreement to facilitate the early driving learning process. In accordance with Connecticut State Law, seat belt use is required for all teenagers. Cell phone use is also prohibited (regardless of whether or not a hands-free device is utilized). You should also consider restricting teenage driving during inclement weather.

Bike

- Always wear a bicycle helmet, no matter how short or long the ride.
- Ride on the right side of the road, in the same direction as vehicle traffic.
- Use appropriate hand signals.
- Respect traffic lights and stop signs.
- Wear bright-colored clothing to increase visibility. White or light-colored clothing and reflective gear is especially important after dark.

Walking to School

- Make sure your child's walk to school is a safe route with well-trained adult crossing guards at major intersections.
- Identify other children in the neighborhood with whom your child can walk to school.
- Be realistic about your child's pedestrian skills. Because small children are impulsive and less cautious around traffic, carefully consider whether or not your child is ready to walk to school without adult supervision.
- If your children are young or are walking to a new school, walk with them the first week or until you are sure they know the route and can do it safely.
- Bright-colored clothing will make your child more visible to drivers.

Bullying

Bullying or cyberbullying is when one child picks on another child repeatedly. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social. It can happen at school, on the playground, on the school bus, in the neighborhood, over the internet or through mobile devices like cell phones. If you feel your child is the victim of bullying please feel free to speak to one of the Simsbury Police Department's School Resource Officers; Officer Kushman or Officer May.

When Your Child Is Bullied:

- Help your child learn how to respond by teaching your child how to:
 1. Look the bully in the eye.
 2. Stand tall and stay calm in a difficult situation.
 3. Walk away.
- Teach your child how to say in a firm voice:
 1. "I don't like what you are doing."
 2. "Please do NOT talk to me like that."
 3. "Why would you say that?"
- Teach your child when and how to ask a trusted adult for help.
- Encourage your child to make friends with other children.
- Support activities that interest your child.
- Alert school officials to the problems and work with them on solutions.
- Make sure an adult who knows about the bullying can watch out for your child's safety and well-being when you cannot be there.
- Monitor your child's social media or texting interactions so you can identify problems before they get out of hand.

When Your Child Is the Bully:

- Be sure your child knows that bullying is never OK.
- Set firm and consistent limits on your child's aggressive behavior.
- Be a positive role model. Show children they can get what they want without teasing, threatening or hurting someone.
- Use effective, non-physical discipline, such as loss of privileges.
- Develop practical solutions with the school principal, teachers, counselors, and parents of the children your child has bullied.

When Your Child Is a Bystander:

- Encourage your child to join with others in telling bullies to stop.
- Encourage your child to tell a trusted adult about the bullying.
- Help your child support other children who may be bullied.
- Encourage your child to include these children in activities

Please don't hesitate to contact the Simsbury Police Department (860) 658-3100 with any questions or concerns regarding back to school safety.